

Linda Clair
Evening Meeting and Weekend Meditation Retreat
8–10 November 2019, Barcelona, Spain
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 3b – Sunday morning discussion

Linda: How are you M.?

Question: I'm well. I've had to make lots of effort to come back to the meditation. Lots of thinking about things going on.

Linda: Does it feel good to be doing it again, or is there a bit of a shock?

Question: Yes, I have a lot of certainty that this is the right thing to be doing with my life, but some difficulty in making enough of a commitment to it.

Linda: I wouldn't worry about that. It'll fluctuate.

Question: It's good to be here and doing some serious meditation for a few days.

Linda: And it will really affect the rest of your trip. It's good that you're doing it near the beginning.

Question: As you know I think, I spent fourteen months not drinking alcohol. I started drinking again at the start of the year and, although I don't drink a lot, I feel it has a significant impact on my resolution and my meditation. I think I'm going to stop again – I want to, as part of my resolution to commit to meditation.

Linda: Good, because any sort of drug does weaken your will; you know if you feel some sort of tension you can just take something – whatever it is – and you'll get a short respite.

Question: I also think the same way about coffee, my mobile phone, television – they all actually have the same flavour.

Linda: Yes, I agree, but I think it's better to do one at a time. Too much at once is too much of a shock. I'm still working on my mobile. (laughing)

Question: Little diversions from reality.

Linda: Well, they can be, but it depends on the intention. My mobile is like my office, and probably the same for you. But I do also look at unnecessary things on it. (laughing) But don't be too hard on yourself at first, don't be too strict, particularly if you decide to give up the alcohol. Maybe be strict with that but nothing else for a while. And particularly doing this, I don't really think it's good to be too pure.

But yes, alcohol for me now – it's not that I'm against alcohol – but I've just got no reason to drink and it does definitely affect your brain quite strongly. And I'd say jet lag is a bit like drinking. ☺ But

it's not that I've got anything morally against drinking; it doesn't bother me. I just know what it does to my body so I don't bother. In fact, I don't have anything morally against anything. I've got no morals at all. 😊

It was very beautiful what you said yesterday P. I didn't get clear about it at the time. But O. explained it to me a bit later.

Question: The language is a problem.

Linda: In a way. It's so good having O. here (to translate.)

Question: In other retreats I've been with you – except the first one where I experienced something like peace – usually practice during a retreat equals pain in my whole body. And I don't know if I'm meditating or I'm just suffering really hard – especially a pricking sensation here on one side. If I find out who's doing that, he's going to regret it. (laughter)

Linda: Is that under your right shoulder blade, around that area? (Yes.) That is regarded at the heart centre. I had the same thing.

This morning I wanted to say while I was sitting that you're not suffering needlessly. This morning when I was sitting it was just so amazing, so peaceful and beautiful. It's just worth anything. So you're not going through this for nothing. If I could give you a taste of how it will be, you would be willing to do anything. And you keep coming back so it must mean that something is happening, something is attracting you to this.

Question: When I meditate between retreats the first thirty minutes is pure gold. Lately, for the first thirty minutes I feel relaxed and I really feel my breath in my belly, but my back is sort of collapsed and forward. After these thirty minutes my back naturally straightens up. I can't feel that the energy is localised; it's everywhere in my body and sometimes there's a lot of turmoil in my mind. So I'd like know if I should meditate a bit longer to intensify the whole thing, or if to sit for an hour is okay for me?

Linda: Maybe sometimes sit for bit longer. You need to keep challenging yourself, and it will be uncomfortable at times. But you've got to be very careful not to get into too much of a routine where expectations subtly start to arise. You need to be completely open to change. So when you start sitting have as little intention as possible. The only intention is to sit until the bell goes. And what happens during your sitting is secondary to the fact that you're sitting. So change the times that you sit – sometimes one hour, sometimes an hour and ten, sometimes an hour and a half, sometimes fifty minutes.

Linda: How are you H.?

Question: I had so much pain in the second sit.

Linda: That brought you in.

Question: Yes, did it ever! It was very intense.

Linda: How are you A.?

Question: Good. I could see I had less pain today and I could see that I was much less alert. Yesterday it felt – even with fairly intense pain in my legs, thighs, bum – I felt energised and alert and practicing strongly, coming back, coming back.

Linda: Be careful you don't judge this as being less effective.

Question: I was in way; when I was lost in thought I would sometimes think, "Oh, hopefully the bell doesn't sound for a while because I need to make up for that." It reminds me that at home I sometimes have a fairly intense reaction to having been lost in thought – spontaneous crying – that doesn't feel like regret or feeling bad about it. There hasn't been time to think; it seems more a spontaneous bodily reaction to having been lost in thought.

Linda: You've had that crying for a while, haven't you?

Question: Yes, that phase is on to a year-and-a-half now of crying; mostly after, when stretching, but sometimes during.

Linda: So I would say, you need to do that, your body does, because you've been holding a lot together for a long time, and you're gradually letting it go. So it's a good thing. I did a lot of crying too, usually in private.

How are you feeling P.?

Question: Not really sure. Yesterday and today, all of the time, it feels like there's a massive, thick, solid energy encasing the front of my body, my face and head. So I can't really feel that part of my body, but I still can feel my abdomen going up and down when I'm breathing. So there's a little column of breath going up and down in the midst of something like a rock. Yesterday that felt intensely uncomfortable, but not painful. Today it was more like the only thing I could find was my breath and I was there the whole time and there was no thinking. Of course there was some thinking, but when thinking started it bumped into this energy and it didn't go anywhere. Today it seemed that there wasn't anywhere else to be but in this one little sliver of space so I stayed there.

Linda: Just keep doing that. Let your body lead you. Just do instinctively what you feel to do. Don't worry whether you think it's right or wrong. Just go with your basic instinct.

Question: In this last hour there was more of a feeling of it being easier because it didn't seem like there was anything else I could do. Yesterday there was a trying to figure it out and more of a searching for what's going on.

Linda: Well, that's what thinking's all about, trying to know what's going on. And you don't need to know what's going on. You don't need to know that you're sitting here in this room. And as the trust in this deepens you gradually give up trying to know. The less fear, the less you want to know. But there are layers of that and each time you reach a new layer there can be a bit of discomfort and fear that arises. So you will tend to try to grab onto something that you know.

Question: With my mediation posture I have a few doubts because sometimes my head wants to lean forward and my back as well. I don't do it on purpose. I don't know if I should go with that movement forward or make an effort and correct that posture.

Linda: I would say, make an effort and correct that posture. Energetically things like that can happen but they can also turn into a habit. So I would say, just make that effort to stay straighter. It will keep you more alert and more independent.

Question: Independent of what?

Linda: Independent of the mind. The mind weakens us. It's a bit like a drug. It's often easier to go with it than to take a stand and say, "No, I'm not going that way." Most people are addicted to thinking and it takes a lot of effort to start to break away from that. But's it's not all doom and gloom.